

An Operational Model for Utilizing Social Media to Enhance the Quality of Public Relations in the Insurance Industry

Fariba. Amini¹, Ali Mohammad. Mazidi Sharaf Abadi^{1*}, Seyed Mahmoud Reza. Mortazavi¹, Gholamhossein. Biabani¹

¹ Department of Communication Sciences, May.C., Islamic Azad University, Meybod, Iran

* Corresponding author email address: 4432222816@iau.ir

E d i t o r	R e v i e w e r s
Mohammed Abdul Imran Khan  Department of Financial Management and Economics, Dhofar University, Oman mimran@du.edu.om	Reviewer 1: Mehrdad Bayat  Assistant Professor, Department of Management, Payam Noor University, Tehran, Iran. Email: bayatmehrdad60@pnu.ac.ir Reviewer 2: Abbas Monavarian  Professor, Management Department, Tehran University, Tehran, Iran. Email: amonavar@ut.ac.ir

1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

In the first paragraph of the Method section, the statement “Data collection and analysis were conducted simultaneously and iteratively” requires a more detailed procedural explanation. The authors should clarify how early interviews informed subsequent participant selection, revisions to the interview guide, and the development of emerging categories. For example, the manuscript should describe whether questions concerning organizational culture, managerial support, or technological infrastructure were added or refined after these concepts emerged in initial interviews. Such details are necessary to demonstrate that theoretical sampling and iterative analysis were genuinely implemented rather than reported only as general characteristics of grounded theory.

In the paragraph on trustworthiness, the statement “data triangulation was performed by comparing the perspectives of academics and executive managers” should be reconsidered. Comparing participant groups within the same interview dataset is more accurately described as source triangulation than data triangulation in the broad methodological sense. The authors should specify the form of triangulation used and explain how disagreements between academics, managers, and public

relations professionals were treated analytically. It is important to report not only convergent views but also divergent or negative cases that challenged the emerging model.

The member-checking procedure described in the sentence “member checking was conducted to confirm that the researchers’ interpretations were consistent with the experts’ intended meanings” needs greater precision. The authors should report how many participants took part in member checking, what material they reviewed, whether they evaluated interview transcripts, category definitions, or the final model, and what changes were made as a result. Merely stating that member checking occurred is insufficient; readers need evidence that participant feedback influenced or confirmed the analytical structure.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the new document.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

In the Research Setting section, the sentence “The study population comprised academic experts in management, communications, and social media, professional public relations specialists, and senior managers in the insurance industry” identifies several heterogeneous participant groups, but the manuscript does not report how many participants belonged to each group. A participant-characteristics table should be added containing participant code, professional role, disciplinary background, organizational position, years of experience, age range, gender, and interview duration. This information would allow readers to assess whether the sample adequately represented academic, managerial, technical, and public relations perspectives and whether any category of informants disproportionately shaped the resulting model.

The inclusion criterion stated as “at least five years of professional experience” appears inconsistent with the demographic findings, which report that 7.1% of participants had “0–5 years” of work experience. The authors must resolve this discrepancy. It should be clarified whether the participant had exactly five years of experience, whether the demographic category was incorrectly labeled, or whether an individual who did not meet the inclusion criterion was retained. Because eligibility criteria directly affect methodological rigor, this inconsistency should be corrected in both the Method and Findings sections.

The claim that “after 14 in-depth semi-structured interviews, data collection was discontinued because the categories had become repetitive and no new concepts emerged” should be supported by a transparent account of theoretical saturation. The authors should distinguish between code saturation and meaning saturation and indicate after which interview no new major category emerged and how many additional interviews were conducted to confirm saturation. A saturation table showing the emergence of major categories across interviews, or at least a narrative describing the progression toward saturation, would substantially strengthen the credibility of the sampling decision.

In the Research Procedure section, the manuscript states that “Data were collected through semi-structured interviews,” but it does not provide sufficient information about the interview protocol. The authors should report the main interview questions, probing questions, location or medium of interviews, average and range of interview duration, recording procedures, transcription method, and whether transcripts were returned to participants for review. The interview guide should preferably be included as an appendix. Without this information, readers cannot adequately evaluate whether the interviews were sufficiently focused on the operational use of social media in insurance public relations.

The sentence “Data analysis was conducted using MAXQDA software and followed the procedures of open, axial, and selective coding” is too general for a grounded theory study. The authors should provide concrete examples showing how raw interview statements were transformed into initial codes, subcategories, main categories, and the core category. A coding illustration should be included with at least three complete analytic chains, such as an interview quotation leading to an open code, then to an axial category such as “managerial attitude toward social media,” and finally to its role within the paradigm model. This would make the analytical process auditable and demonstrate that the categories were grounded in participants’ accounts.

The manuscript identifies “the effectiveness and quality of organizational interaction with audiences through social media” as the core category, but the justification for selecting it is insufficient. The authors should explain how this category met established criteria for a grounded theory core category, including centrality, frequency of connection with other categories, explanatory capacity, analytical inclusiveness, and ability to account for variation in the phenomenon. It should also be clarified whether alternative core categories were considered and why they were rejected. At present, the core category appears descriptively appropriate, but its theoretical integration needs stronger demonstration.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the new document.

2. Revised

Editor’s decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.